

Taylor University

## Pillars at Taylor University

---

Wandering Wheels Newsletter

Ringenberg Archives & Special Collections

---

12-1-2002

### Wandering Wheels Newsletter, December 2002

Wandering Wheels

Follow this and additional works at: <https://pillars.taylor.edu/wanderingwheels-newsletter>

---

#### Recommended Citation

Wandering Wheels, "Wandering Wheels Newsletter, December 2002" (2002). *Wandering Wheels Newsletter*. 13.

<https://pillars.taylor.edu/wanderingwheels-newsletter/13>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Ringenberg Archives & Special Collections at Pillars at Taylor University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Wandering Wheels Newsletter by an authorized administrator of Pillars at Taylor University. For more information, please contact [pillars@taylor.edu](mailto:pillars@taylor.edu).



# WANDERING WHEELS

## NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER OF 2002



SINCE 1964

### PASSING THE BUS TORCH!

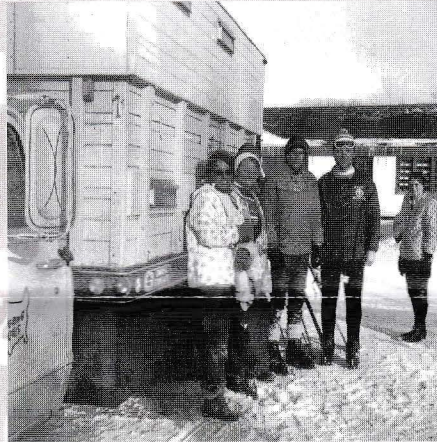
After speaking at a youth meeting in the rural Mid-west I asked the kids what they did for excitement. The general consensus was that driving to a nearby town and "hanging out" was the "exciting" thing to do. I was getting burned out on trying to influence kids through public speaking, having spoken to thousands over a period of 14 years. Many days I drove two to four hundred miles for a half-hour talk. Most of my weekends were spent on the road speaking.

I had already started the Wandering Wheels' cycling ministry which really caught on. The cycling, however, was a warm weather activity and not everyone wanted to bike. I was looking for an outreach for the months of October through May that would be "exciting", and also serve as a platform for teaching.

On a whim I put a camper shell on the back of my '67 1/2-ton Ford pickup and loaded it up with six boys and two other drivers. The idea was to drive all night, minimum stopping, and arrive early morning on the Atlantic Ocean! The boys we invited had never seen an ocean! What a great invention, the ocean! The six young guys frolicked and played nonstop Saturday and Sunday. We got them home by school time Monday morning. Can you imagine the war stories? "Hey, man, what did you do over the weekend?" "Oh, I went to Surf City, New Jersey, and played in the Atlantic Ocean for two days!" I'm sure their friends thought they were on dope. Six boys, 1,400 miles of travel, and all the risks, were the start of a 30-year BUS MINISTRY!

A year or so after the red pick-up truck, Wheels bought a new 1-ton Chevy, put an oak farm-feed-bed on the back and converted the truck into a 15-passenger "Pullman-type" rig.

Fifteen kids would sleep in the back as we headed for D.C., Panama City, Florida, Smoky Mountains, you name it. We ran the wheels off the truck and soon owned a new school bus custom-built to carry 32 sleeping passengers. Young staff guys started joining us and before



**Our first real shot at the Possum idea. Look closely...this is our 1-ton Chevy with feed-bed converted into a camper. It could sleep 15.**



**Possum #1! This "little lady" logged hundreds of thousands of miles. Had "throaty" dual pipes that really rumbled!**

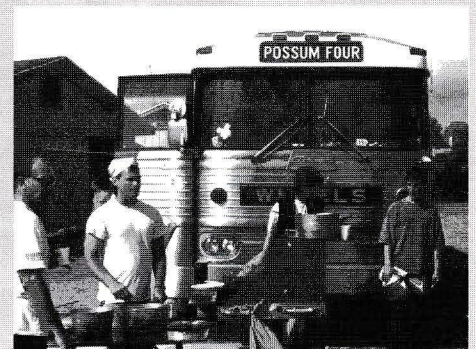
long we were running two buses, both of which were funded by a Lilly Grant. The name "Possum" was given to the buses. Mamma Possum runs at night with her kids on her back or in her pouch, and so it was with the buses, run at night with kids in the "pouch" of the bus! Before long Wheels had a stable of four buses and about 14 college-age staff to drive the mobile retreat rigs. Others, youth leaders, were catching the vision. Buses were popping up all over the country. The hours in labor of love converting the seated buses to sleepers were impressive. Each new bus conversion resulted in finer tuning of the interior. Before long we were driving large Greyhound-type buses. The "Greyhounds" were air conditioned and had air ride. Adults soon discovered the joys of the Possum and were soon competing for the kids' space! Wheels has made thousands of runs and touched virtually every fun spot and scenic spot in the U.S.



**Chip Gosnell, former staff, "tricking" out Possum 8. All the bus interiors were customized by Wheels' staff.**



**Possums #4, #5, and #6 with senior Possum drivers. The drivers and Possums clocked thousands of hours of loving kids!**



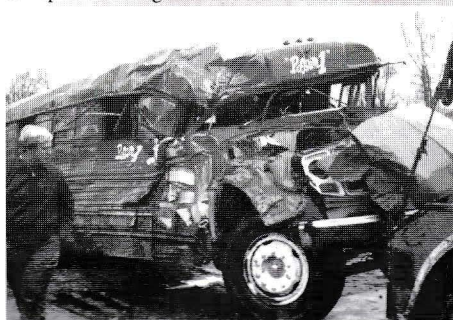
**Staff cooking up a meal on portable kitchen carried in bay of bus.**



Thousands of trips have been completed involving multiple thousands of people, and all of this started with a burned-out public speaker and a red pick-up truck! There are several groups throughout the U.S. carrying on with the idea. Our chapter is closing, but not our inventiveness. Insurance, C.D.L. requirement for drivers, drug testing, and a lack of drivers, have caused us to move away from the Possum ministry allowing us to explore other areas of outreach. (Wheels is in the market to replace the big buses with smaller buses.)



**Possum #2 serving as protector and workhorse on a summer's coast to coast. Riders are sleeping alongside road in hot desert.**

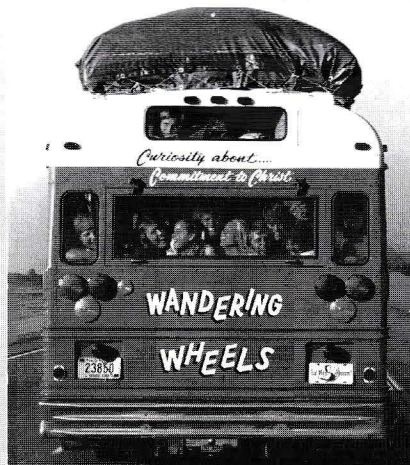


**Possum #1 "bit the dust" back in the '70's. No one hurt! "Thank YOU!"**

As we close this chapter, a footnote: God has trusted Wheels with so many lives in high risk activity, and during all our travels and adventures, we have been privileged to see His hand in letting us bring them all home safely! "Thank you, Father!"

## BOB LINCOLN

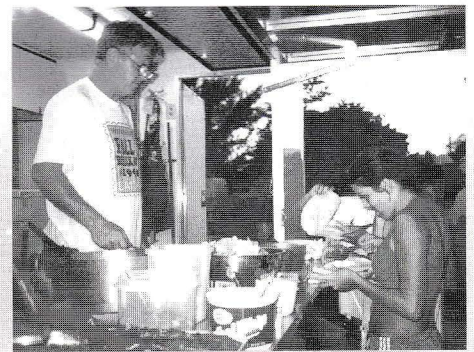
Many of you know Bob Lincoln. He rode bikes and provided support as bus driver, cook, group leader, and wore about any hat we gave him. Most recently, he developed his own bus program under the name of



**A Possum headed for Florida. The "Curiously about...Commitment to Christ" statement is Wheels' desire to create enough good environment for healthy commitment.**

Cross the Line, Inc. He had a flourishing business, almost more than he could handle. A new bus was on the drawing board for Cross the Line...he was shooting for the stars. Re-occurring neck and shoulder problems resulted in a neck operation.

Well, Bob has met with debilitating complications from the operation. He has experienced a loss of normal use of his legs. His walking is limited to the use of a walker. His hand strength has been greatly reduced. So, on paper, it looks like one man's dream has ended. It doesn't make sense that the many years of ministering to thousands would be cut short. Bob, of course, is looking for answers. A lot of us are praying. Like so many whose dreams and work are put on hold, it's hard not to wonder, "Why me?" There have been thousands of sermons preached on overcoming adversity like this. At the moment, Bob's situation makes one want to ask God for a clue. No one wants it to

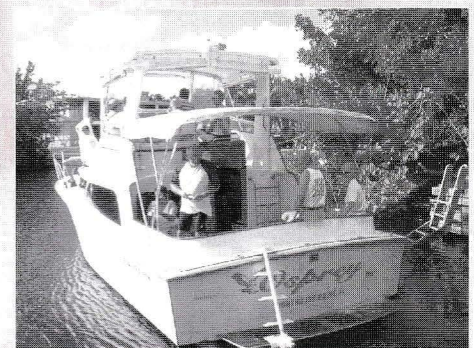


**Bob Lincoln, doing what he does so well...SERVING!**

happen to them. Much of the irony of Christian teaching has to do with God being evidenced best in our weakness. We're confident the fog will lift for Bob and his family. In the spirit of including you, our newsletter family, in the circle of concerned friends, we at Wheels welcome you to hold up a special hope for a type of healing of understanding!

## FLORIDA #1 AND #2

*"Again, thanks for your remarkable touring service. I just can't say enough to people about the great attitude of the entire staff and the spiritual 'aura' which always provides an 'extra dimension' on every WANDERING WHEELS' tour. We'll be back! Warm regards, Hunt Barclay"*



**Rave reviews for Jack Jelsema's hosting us in Key Largo!**

## SPRING COAST TO COAST

The early explorers of the Americas were motivated to push on, hoping that over the next mountain range they would find gold. Call it what you will, many of life's best things happen "en route". You, our Wheels' friends, have put up with my many coincidental, serendipity-related stories.

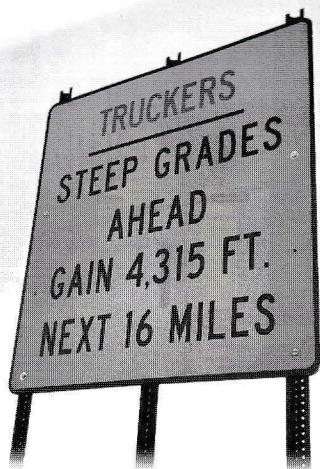
Our 2002 spring team was leaving Minden, Louisiana, on a Saturday morning and heading for Monroe, Louisiana, an 80-mile stretch of beautiful southern back roads when Jack, one of our riders, stopped to check out a new-born colt birthed early that morning.





**First 1,000 miles!**

**What a way to start a morning!**



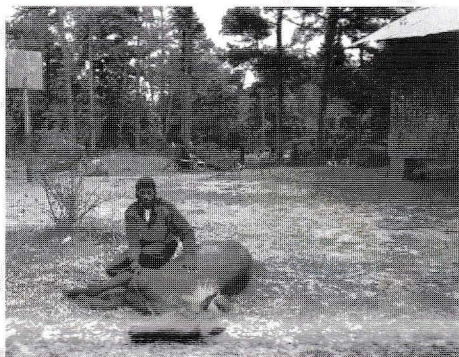
**"Newborn" that attracted riders.**

Because of Jack's interest, most of the team pulled off the road to catch the action. What a beautiful sight, baby colt and adoring mom! The little farm was rustic with a shanty-type atmosphere. The owner of the mother horse was a young man in his twenties. It didn't fit--a young man running this little farm and moonlighting to keep the mortgage paid. When he approached us, his workboots were untied, he had a "dew" rag on his head, and he looked like he was headed for a pick-up game of basketball at the local park. He filled us in on the new colt.



**Young horse trainer showing us his prize.**

As we talked it was apparent that he had a passion for horses. Our attention was soon directed to his pet, a gorgeous brown animal as gentle as a brown Labrador Retriever. Our unlikely horse trainer proceeded to put his pet through her paces, one stunt or trick after another. What a show, right there along the highway on a lazy Saturday morning!



**One of several tricks shown to us. Pretty tough to get a horse to play dead!**

Those of us who repeat the spring route year after year consider each night's visit like visiting family. We probably see many of the people en route more often than some of our own relatives. Even the motel operators look forward to our visits. Many of the motels are operated by families from India and they often live in the motel. We have seen their children grow up. Our good friends, Richard Burns and family, are doing well (remember my sharing the story of his wife's passing?). We sleep in the

desert 20 miles short of Blythe, California. The roadside park is managed by men who spend a year or two as resident managers. We look forward to the life stories that new managers have. We have gone through several school superintendents at the predominately Indian school at Salome, Arizona.

Oh, the number of churches we sleep in along the way! Each year pastors come and go. Church secretaries and janitors are as important as anyone in our church stays. Many times our contact person at a church tells us where the key is, to enjoy, and "God bless you!" Often we never see anyone, but feel their welcome. Homer, one of our dear church greeters, has gone into a nursing home...kinda like he slipped away into the night. One of our favorites, the hard,



**Great sign in front of the Lutheran Church in Mesquite, Texas!**

"ole" lady truck stop owner, has closed shop and settled down in town. The Lutheran pastor in Mesquite, Texas, always a positive welcoming force, received news of a life-threatening illness. The church mobilized a "prayer community" for his recovery. Who knows what news will greet us during next year's visit? One of the "smiley-face" stories comes from a rural church near Mineola, Texas. This little country church built showers for our Wandering Wheels' team! When we pulled in this year a whole committee was waiting for us and immediately escorted us to two beautiful showers! The pastor had quite a battle with some of the church members about the practical need for showers.



**Spring Coast to Coasters, along with church members who fed us and built showers for the Wandering Wheels!**



We are the only ones to take full advantage of such a gift. The pastor, upon completion of the showers, went to town and found a bum who needed and wanted a shower. He brought the bum to the church and formally christened the showers with the bum's cleansing, kinda rubbing the church dissenters' noses in it. One of our best visits is the year-after-year-feed in Minden, Louisiana, put on by the gals at the Lakeview United Methodist Church. The Coca Cola bottling plant in town serves up enough "Power Aid" to last several days. We stay in a motel in Vicksburg, Mississippi. The same lady manager greets us each year. She rolls out the carpet and then wishes us well upon leaving town. There's always a warm welcome at Paul Truitt Memorial in Pearl, Mississippi. Ed Beasley opens his home up to us in Luverne, Alabama. The family from India at the Best Western in Abbeville, Alabama, has been a part of our Wheels' community for many years. It's great to hear the Indian motel owners' kids speaking with a southern accent! A "big one" is our fish fry in Edison, Georgia.



**"The Men"...these guys, year to year, boil up a feed to die for! I'm sure if one had a steady diet of this great food it would contribute to an early grave!**

The Chamber of Commerce feeds and houses us in Sylvester, Georgia.



**The Sylvester Chamber...always a welcome SIGN!**

The next night we're in Waycross, Georgia, and just a one day's ride from the Atlantic! Our dear friend, Bertha, from Waycross, passed away last year. She was in her nineties and the life of the party!

**Great story! These gals were from Haiti (strawberry pickers). Janech is giving them collection money that the team put together over the weeks.**

The above is a very brief sketch of the multiple encounters that make the coast to coast work.

Ronnie Parker had to leave early on our last day together. He left the following note:

*"Before I started this trip, I was reading the words on the side of the Wandering Wheels' truck, 'Success is in the journey, not the destination.', and it was hard to identify with them because I thought my goal was destination-oriented. Was I ever wrong! I now get it! The journey IS what it's all about, the people we meet and the relationships formed. Each of you has been an image of God to me. Please pray for me that as I continue my journey through life it may count for Christ and Him alone. I love you guys and will miss each and every one of you."*

## SCOOTERS

Surprise!! There's a new kid on the block! He weighs 200 pounds and stands about three feet tall. He has a tiny heart, 50cc's in size, and runs like a deer. The new kid can go 100 miles on a little over one gallon of juice. You can ride him hard and put him away wet. And the best thing is,



**"Mean" motor scooter!**

he's CUTE! Waitresses come out of restaurants and want to ride him. Little kids want to take him home. Older people, who wouldn't let their children associate with him, now call him "friend". His name is Zuma and you need citizenship papers for him. He is Oriental and bionic. Much of him is robot made. His heart and legs come from Italy, shoes from Taiwan, and who knows where his outer garments are made?

After Janech and I finished scouting out Italy on motor scooters for our upcoming April 2003 bike tour, we decided to experiment with a U.S. scooter tour. Invitations were sent out in the winter of 2002. The proposed scooter ride would be Highway 66 from Needles, California, to St. Louis, Missouri, 2,000 miles. Nineteen of us linked up in Laughlin, Nevada, (cheap air fare!) and proceeded to scooter Old Route 66 through Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Missouri. What a way to touch



**Put away for the night!**

U.S. Highway History! As one gets older, the scootering is a great alternative for spicing up the cycling. Biking and scootering really compliment each other. Most of the highway biking skills are easily transferred to scootering. The ease and speed of the scooter allows you to cram a few more of life's travels into a rapidly closing window as we age. Scootering is down hill skiing and road cycling is cross country skiing. Both are good. As you can see on the 2003 schedule, Wheels has two proposed scooter runs. Check us out!

## MAINE TO NOVA SCOTIA

*Coach and Janech,*

*Thanks again for another great chapter in the story of my life. The Maine-Nova Scotia trip was great.*

*My congratulations go out to Coach for all of his scheduling efforts and seeing us through when we are on the road.*

*What a great group of people that Wheels attracts.*

*Thanks Janech for keeping all of those wheels rolling.*

**Signed: Hunter**

Notes like this one sure do make our work fun. It was a long bus ride to Portland, Maine, and even longer back from Nova Scotia. There's something in the name, Nova Scotia. I wonder, if they had named it Jonesville would people be attracted to this part of Canada?? We had a great ride! No rain to speak of, terrain was very fair and wind not a factor. Like other parts of Canada, it continued to work its magic.



**Al and Jenita "bear-ly" able to pass up lobster on Nova Scotia trip.**



Marilyn Proper, a regular since Wheels' early years, is a wood carver. While on the Nova Scotia run she handed me a small, 1-inch boot with the following poem which was written by her. "Thanks, Marilyn!"

### ***This Little Shoe***

*In Life, we learn to walk. Most people walk in the physical and some walk in the spiritual. As we grow, walking becomes*



*easier. The strength and balance when we*

*first began was shaky. Our footing was unsure. We needed help. Someone to guide us and keep us from harm. In time, the strength builds and we walk on our own. The roads we choose to walk down are our own choice. Then, there are those roads that God asks us on. These also require a first step with obedience and faith to start that journey which is before us. This little shoe is to represent the many steps of faith we take in our walk with Jesus.*

### **FALL BREAKAWAY**

Brighton, Ontario, is located about 80 miles east of Toronto. Brighton was our starting point for the Fall Breakaway. Our route ran along the Bay of Quinte which led us into the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Thousand Islands. Canada continues to be a rewarding country in which to cycle. The people are welcoming. The pace of



**Fall Breakaway gang in Ottawa.**



**Two of our role models, Ed Slaybaugh (87) and Bill Fisher (82)!**

life seems just a bit more relaxing. We used several churches for lodging. Ross Redford, our Canadian contact, did a super job of setting up the churches. The churches all had great histories. Because of their age there is a tendency to think they would be "stuffy". Not so! Our Wheels' gang couldn't have been more welcomed. We picked up a great theatre in Gananoque. Our last day was "doing" Ottawa, the capital of Canada. As always, the Fall Breakaway seems to tie our year's activities together. It's a time of good Christian fellowship.

### **LOOKING AHEAD...ITALY IN 2003**

Plans are in place for our cycling tour in Italy for April-May 2003. Janech and I scouted the route two years ago. It's a GREAT ROUTE. All of Italy lends itself to touring. We have tried to route the tour away from as much mountain riding as possible, with bus and train options available daily.

We'll sight-see Rome and train to the Perugia (Assisi) area. We will stay two to three days in each major town and have sight-seeing rides out from the overnights. Next, Arezzo and surrounding area for two nights, on to Siena for two nights, and then Florence for a three-day stay. We continue north to Bologna and Modena. Some of our best cycling will be north to Venice via Ferrara. After a two-day Venice stay we'll train back to Rome. It really is an exciting piece of geography with a cycle touring pace that is a real plus. LOVE TO HAVE YOU WITH US!



**One of many sights we'll see in Italy.**

### **LOOKING AHEAD...2003 SUMMER COAST TO COAST**

This will be our 60th time across America! We may not be record breakers in a lot of areas, but I'm confident no other group has 60 crossings to its credit!

This will be our last summer crossing. We'll do the traditional spring crossing in the years to come. The U.S. bike crossing is still the heart of our program. The weekly phone calls or letters that come in from former coast-to-coast vets serve as warm reminders of the impact of 36 years of transcontinental cycling.

A mom, whose two sons rode two years in a row back in '73 and '74, recently sent for information

for her 18-year-old grandson and 12-year-old granddaughter. The formula that worked 29 years ago for them continues to offer encouragement today.

*We at Wheels are trying to create incentives to encourage high schoolers to join us on the 2003 crossing. Several veteran riders are helping provide scholarship funds. It is our plan to give a \$1,000 deduction to any high school age rider. Wheels will also help in the purchase of a bike and other essentials for the ride.*

This summer's ride will be one where we'll "pull out all the stops" and, hopefully, make it one of the best ever. Many of our friends who have been our hosts across America are anxious for our return. It's been two years since our last visit.

You "Old C to C Vets" are encouraged to toss some bucks our way to help with the 2003 crossing's high school scholarship funds!

### **THE HUFFMAN BOYS**

The Huffman boys dropped by, recently. Berry from Colorado, Gary from Madison, Indiana, and Zane from Indianapolis. The Huffman family has played a big role in our ongoing program. Nat and Phyllis' home was Wheels' "Southern Indiana Headquarters"! All three men graduated from Taylor. Zane was on Wheels' staff several years. All three have ridden across the U.S. They are all "married with children!" Many of us couldn't wait for the day when they would have to pay their dues!!! They're doing a great job as dads and hubbies!

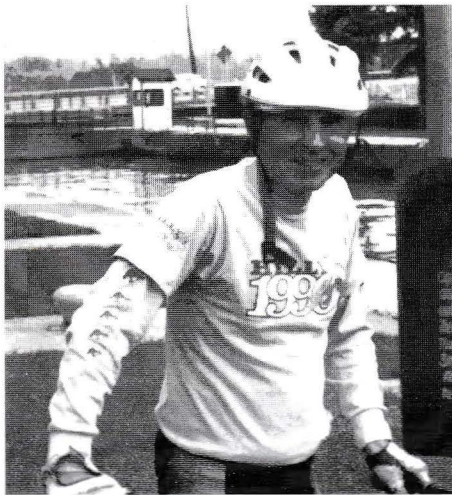


**The Huffman Boys-**

### **OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE...**

Herb Boyd, father of Dan Boyd, uncle of Devec Boyd and brother of Ralph Boyd, passed away in January 2002. Herb was a real friend of Wheels. He was a major player in our U.S. crossing of '68, the trip during which we did our breakthrough movie, "Wheels Across America". Herb spent a lifetime in the Methodist Church ministry and, after retirement, continued to SERVE. Wheels was recipient of much of his service.





**Dick Hoffman, a Wheels' vet of many rides. Dick was active in the Hilly Hundred, as well as Wheels. He always brought a subtle humor to the Wheels' camp. Dick passed away this fall.**

### "KITCHEN-RETREAT HOUSE"

Last year the "Kitchen" was booked 155 times. Since the addition of the pool its use has picked up.

A father was checking out the facility, recently. You could tell he was a tough, no-nonsense kind of

guy. I asked him what he thought of the building. He looked around at all the religious symbolism and said, "It's just the right balance, a feeling of church, but the freedom to run and play and be noisy." I could tell he had been turned off by church, but the Wheels' Kitchen seemed to encourage him.

Kinda crazy, but we have tried to make the building "Kid Proof". When we added the pool, part of the pool roof butted up to a balcony on the Kitchen building. NEW RULE! Kids have been crawling over the balcony railing and playing on the pool roof. We have had to build a fence to stop "pool roof walking"! Where there's a Kid, there's a way!

It's a real joy to have the Kitchen as part of our ministry. Even the man who provides our firewood brings a smile. He delivers the wood in an old truck and trailer. He cuts it, splits it, loads it in the truck and trailer, hauls the double load several miles to us, unloads it, all for \$100.00. You only have to buy wood for a camp ground camp fire to know the labor of love of our wood man. The people who mow our Wheels' grounds bring the same spirit. We look forward to their working around us.



**The "Kitchen" Pool getting a work out.**

This past summer a youth group from Clayton, Ohio, (Salem Church of God) while using the Kitchen, spent a part of a day handing out free cold drinks at Wal-Mart. Another day they handed out quarters at the local laundromat. They really loved the pool!

### CLOSING

Last year's Wheels' motto was "This land was made for you and me." The motto for 2001 was "Nothing but blue skies..." "One day at a time" is the motto for 2003. So many store check-out people, without skipping a beat, say, "Have a good one!" "One day at a time" is very much in the spirit of "Success is in the journey, not the destination."

The joy of riding with many of you has been in recounting the joys of the day's ride...the weather was a plus, ate at a great restaurant, met a wonderful person, the sag came along at the right time...all these little joys shared seem to put meaning into "live for the day". I don't know of a community of people that celebrates "count your blessings" more than our Wheels' gang! "2002" has been good 365 days!

You, our newsletter family, remain our core! Spread the word about our upcoming trips and THANKS for your financial help!

*Bob & Staff*

### 2003 TRIP SCHEDULE

Florida Keys #1	JAN 12-JAN 22
Florida Keys #2	JAN 26-FEB 5
Arizona Hwy. Motor Scooter	MAR 5-MAR 25
Italy	APR 27-MAY 18
Summer Coast to Coast (60th)	JUN 19-AUG 7
Fall Breakaway	SEP 12-SEP 21
Smoky Mt. Motor Scooter	OCT 9-OCT 19

